



## Cultural Overlay District Advisory Committee

MEETING SUMMARY, January 8, 2009

**Committee members present:** Paul Breckenridge, Randy Engstrom, Jerry Everard, Pat Graney, Fen Hsiao, Matthew Kwatinetz, Fidelma McGinn, Richard Muhlebach, Jim Reinhardtsen, Michael Seiwerath, Robert Sondheim, Paige Weinheimer.

**City of Seattle attendees:** Seattle City Councilmember Nick Licata, Chris Godwin (City Council Central Staff), Michael Killoren (Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs), Dennis Meier (Department of Planning and Development).

**Consultant staff:** Kjristine Lund, Dennis Sellin

### 1. Introductory remarks

The meeting began at 10:30 am. Councilmember Licata welcomed attendees, and thanked members for their past achievements, particularly the co-chairs Fidelma McGinn and Jim Reinhardtsen. The councilmember welcomed Michael Seiwerath to the committee, and acknowledged the co-chairs for this phase of the effort, Fidelma McGinn and Randy Engstrom.

Councilmember Licata gave a summary of city council's legislative efforts on behalf of CODAC in the most recent budget. The recommendations for cultural liaison and a reinvigorated SPACEfinder program did not pass, but there is a chance for a statement of legislative intent by June of this year.

Licata also gave committee members a challenge to engage communities in this new phase. He stressed that evidence of communitywide support for a project or program is an effective way to get the attention and support of the City Council. Thus, it may be beneficial for this phase of the CODAC to ensure a strong outreach element, and find ways of integrating with the community in order to gain broader public support.

Two questions were asked. The first had to do with the overall state of the economy, and the possibility of any funding from the proposed federal economic stimulus package. (Answer: unknown at this point.)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Since the January 8 meeting, there has been some movement in this area. Americans for the Arts has proposed Nine Recommendations for Economic Recovery & the Arts to help nonprofit and governmental arts groups as well as individual artists. On January 15, Americans for the Arts representatives met with the Obama Transition Team to discuss these and other ideas.

Also on January 15, the House Appropriations Committee released an \$825 billion economic recovery package. Included in the proposed bill is an infusion of \$50 million for the National Endowment for the Arts (in addition to its annual appropriations). The House plan proposes additional opportunities throughout other parts of the federal government that could also help the nonprofit arts sector and individual artists.

The second question had to do with neighborhood plan updates, which have been approved by council. Councilmember Licata stated that the level of effort for the neighborhood updates will not be as comprehensive as that from the mid-1990s, and that the first priority neighborhoods will be in southeast Seattle, on the light rail line to open this summer. (N.B. Those neighborhoods will be Beacon Hill, McClellan, and Othello.)

## 2. Re-cap of recommendations and proposed work plan for CODAC's next phase

Co-chairs Engstrom and McGinn gave a brief summary of CODAC's past work, and the tasks it faces over the next three months. This phase of the effort will be more focused, and there are two distinct areas of focus: projects and partnerships; and incentives and financing. It was proposed that the committee split into two working groups, each of which will focus on one of these areas over the next four meetings. Besides the subcommittee work, there will be time at each meeting for the whole committee to discuss all topics.

## 3. Discussion: goals, products, timing

Kjristine Lund outlined the discussion topics for the committee, and also gave an outline of an overall approach and possible outcomes for the committee as it works toward recommendations to city council.

First, we must take note that the entire landscape has altered dramatically since early September. The economic crisis has now become the number one priority for most governments, and many people are worried about their jobs, their futures, and their finances. One of CODAC's challenges is to assess the status of arts issues on Capitol Hill in this new light, and also to find areas where the goals are common or complementary. (See the proposal for the economic stimulus package, above.)

Lund stated a goal for the committee: to recommend actionable items to the council.

### *Goals*

Under the discussion of goals, committee members offered the following:

- Physical space for arts and culture;
- Value of the arts, as institutions, as elements in the critical mass that encompasses and defines a neighborhood or city, as business ventures, for property values, and for neighborhood value and identity;
- Make new development attractive to arts and artists;
- Organize the community around issues of arts and culture;
- Representation of the arts in planning at every level;
- Educate the community to elevate the value of the arts in the community's estimation.
- Seek alliances—where does arts & culture meet economic development?
- Attribute value to the arts (identifying a monetary value would help), reframe how we think about arts, have a community where the arts are an integral element;
- Consider arts as a catalyst for economic recovery and development.

An overall goal statement from this discussion could include the following:

- Define value.

- Identify tools.
- Leverage programs.

Around each of these tasks is the overall goal of generating advocacy.

Remember: replicable templates exist for the work we are about to engage in.

### *Outcomes*

What is the form that action could take? There is a recognition of the need for interconnectedness of the arts and integration into the life of the community. CODAC should invite neighborhoods to participate in its efforts, and in turn should reciprocate in its support of community organizations and other efforts. Advocacy must be for artists, but not just artists. What this committee focuses on is not going to be “either/or” statements. We are talking about the loss of a creative center. Loss should be defined; data should be collected to calculate that loss. In spite of this, we need to discuss what we want proactively, instead of representing it as replacing something lost.

Some ideas for products of the committee could be:

- Community organizing—creating a voice for advocacy;
- Outreach—webpage, brochure, public presentation.

### *Timing*

The next thing to consider after goals is timing: what can be done now? In its recommendations, the CODAC should consider steps for immediate action, those for 2010, and longer-term actions.

Before breaking into two working subcommittee groups, Lund asked the groups to consider the following:

What is our goal?

What are our priorities?

What are the outcomes we would like to see result from our actions?

## 4. Facilitated subcommittee discussion and work

### *Partnerships and Projects:*

The subcommittee was given a handout with an initial list of potential partnerships among major and mid-sized institutions in the Capitol Hill/First Hill area, and projects that are proposed, pending or underway.

The first recognition of this subcommittee is that we are now in a different world. The gentrification and overdevelopment that was so rampant one year ago has now slowed down, or even halted. Thus, there is time and space to consider strategic plans for CODAC:

What or who can CODAC align with? What does that group or organization care about, and how would CODAC’s involvement aid in that? What are the potential projects and partnerships that CODAC could add to, rather than just piggyback onto?

Thus, CODAC needs to articulate its value equation. It also needs to be prepared, when talking to potential partners, with a carefully crafted strategy demonstrating this value

and the how value for both is enhanced through integration of CODAC with the partner's proposed project(s).

A tangible beginning would be for CODAC to identify organizations on Capitol Hill whose support it would like to obtain, and get that support in writing.

Gather data: Odd Fellows is a clear example—who was there before and who is left, and thus which organizations have been lost? Also, gather comparable data, from Minneapolis, for example. Columbus's Short North arts district may also be comparable (there is a chamber-supported BID there.) Also, look at the Pike/Pine recommendations, and at the City of Music project (reciprocal advocacy, potential template for CODAC efforts.)<sup>2</sup>

Some potential partners, in addition to those identified on the handout, were suggested:

- City Light has an underused space in the South Lake Union area (5,000 s.f.)
- Allied Arts has expressed a willingness to support CODAC;
- Arts Lab (possibly through its training program).
- Capitol Hill Housing's Twelfth Avenue initiative<sup>3</sup> will redefine the look and identity of the neighborhood, with two potential buildings on the north and south ends of 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue, incorporating housing and culture.
- Seattle Central Community College—has a state of the art arts facility on its fifth floor that is not used on weekends. Artist Trust has rented out the space in the past. Both SCCC and Seattle University<sup>4</sup> likely have summer spaces available.

When requesting use of the space of other organizations, they need to know: what space, for what, and how often?

There is a perception that there are some spaces that could be readily available and easy to locate, and perhaps identifying those as a start would be beneficial.

Engage with other arts groups. Support advocacy at the city level through working with communities.

Summary:

- Develop an outreach and coordination program, that emphasizes education and advocacy;
- Look at the notion of an arts infrastructure, that is arts inclusive, rather than exclusive (integration vs. ghettoization.)
- Achieve measurable outcomes.
- Consider policy as an important tool in achieving the above.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.seattlecityofmusic.org/> Contact: James Kebblas

<sup>3</sup> Contact Kate Steinbeck.

<sup>4</sup> Kevin Mayfield, SU Arts. Jody O'Brien, SU social justice program.

## *Incentives and Financing*

Transfer of Development Rights: changing basic economics:

- density bonus (volume, 3-D);
- upzone/downzone height.

Being at the table

City commissions

Design review guidelines

Ways to “pencil” (housing)

- Energy
- Other requirements
- Where can the City step back?
- Fee abatement
- Building and land use codes

Value definition

Players:

Chambers of commerce

Trust for Public Lands

Cascade Conservancy

BMW Dealership

New markets

Taxes

Reinvestment

Grants

How to “pencil out” to encourage/save arts & artist spaces: living, performing, work spaces, visual...

Land use/building codes:

- Incentives
- Process
- \*Criteria
- Flexibility
- Exemptions
- Abatement

Available tools

PDA's

Examples

- BMW dealership (north side of Pike between Harvard and Boylston)
- Spray-King Building (southeast corner of 11th and Pine).

Resources for artists

LEED-type cultural certification?

#### 5. Next steps

The next meeting will be held in the same location on February 6, beginning at 11:00 am. We will try to have 11:00 am starts for all future meetings.